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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000578

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/EX, OBO
DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO AIT/W - MS. BARBARA SCHRAGE

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SUBJECT: TAIPEI MAYOR HAU ON NEW OFFICE COMPOUND, DPP
PROTESTS, LOCAL ELECTIONS, AIR LINKS, AND DEAFLYMPICS

Classified By: Director Stephen M. Young,
For Reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Taipei Mayor Hau Long-bin (KMT) accepted the Director's invitation to attend AIT's New Office Compound (NOC) site dedication ceremony on June 22. Hau also indicated that his staff had approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) about acquiring the plot of land adjacent to the NOC through an exchange of land with another executive agency. In this way, Hau believed the plot could be rezoned and made available to AIT. Hau, who noted that authorities and the opposition had both learned lessons from clashes in a previous demonstration, said he would take a low-key approach to the DPP's planned May 17-18 protests in front of the Presidential Office. Hau predicted the KMT would do well in local elections in December. Hau also outlined his hope to turn downtown Songshan Airport into a regional hub with flights to Tokyo's Haneda Airport, Shanghai's Hongqiao Airport, and, eventually, Seoul's Kimpo Airport. Finally, Hau said he would welcome U.S. assistance for the Deaflympics, similar to that provided to Kaohsiung for the World Games. End Summary.

Mayor Accepts June Invitation to NOC Site Dedication

¶2. (C) In a cordial meeting on May 11, Taipei City Mayor Hau Long-bin accepted the Director's invitation to attend as an honored guest AIT's June 22 site dedication of the New Office Compound (NOC) in Neihu. Hau was accompanied by his advisor Chuang Wen-ssn. The Director gave the Mayor a copy of the AIT letter to TECRO expressing interest in the land adjacent to the NOC and requesting guidance on how best to pursue this interest. Hau said that the city's Urban Development Department had already discussed the issue with MOFA and that MOFA was currently looking to exchange plots with another executive agency. At that point, said Hau, MOFA could rezone the plot next to the NOC, making it available for AIT's use.

Low-key Approach to DPP Protests

¶3. (C) Mayor Hau expressed confidence that the city could manage the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)-led protest in front of the Presidential Office on May 17 and the subsequent May 17-18 silent sit-in protest without difficulty. Hau told the Director he had made clear to

President Ma he would take responsibility for security issues in Taipei. Taipei City officials have heard the DPP has rented 1000 buses to transport supporters from Kaohsiung to Taipei for the protest, Chuang Wen-ssn added.

14. (C) Despite the DPP's deliberate, protest violation of the registration requirements for its May 17-18 sit-in, Hau said, the city will take a low-key approach, having learned its lessons from demonstrations surrounding ARATS Chairman Chen Yun-lin's visit last November. At that time, not enough attention had been paid to crowd control. Even DPP Chair Tsai Ing-wen had felt bad about the clashes that had occurred between police and demonstrators, said Hau. Because both sides had learned lessons, Hau said he expected the May 17-18 protests to be more peaceful. This time, he noted, the city's response would be lower key, using more plainclothes rather than uniformed police officers to avoid raising tensions.

15. (C) Mayor Hau said he would use communication and a relaxed approach to manage the event. He predicted fewer than 60,000 DPP supporters would turn out, but said the city was prepared for 300,000 protestors. (Note: Recent press report the Taipei City government has granted the DPP an overnight extension for their May 17 protest. It is not clear whether the DPP itself applied for the extension. In previous public statements, the DPP has indicated that it would not register its May 17-18 silent sit-in as a protest against KMT-proposed amendments to the Parade and Assembly Law. End note.) Some DPP supporters may want to remain in Kaohsiung (where a separate protest is being held on May 17)

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to show their displeasure with current DPP Chair Tsai Ying-wen, Hau suggested. Hau agreed with the Director's observation that both sides should talk to one another. The two party leaders should talk, said Hau, but, the crucial element of mutual trust is missing.

KMT Will Do Well in December Local Elections

16. (C) Up to now, Hau noted, the KMT does not anticipate any problems for its candidates in the December elections. The KMT is optimistic about Tainan and Chiayi Counties. If Huang Jian-ting wins the Taitung County magistrate's election, said Hau, it could open up a legislative seat for Kuang Li-chen, who lost the KMT primary. The only big concern for the KMT is Taipei County, said Hau, but it appears that Taipei County will be elevated to a special municipality, putting off the election there until 2010. If that happens, the DPP's strongest candidate, former premier Su Tseng-chang, would likely not run, Hau said, as the election in 2010 would be too close to the next presidential election. Su is the DPP's only viable candidate to run in the 2012 presidential election, Hau suggested.

17. (C) DPP war chests are depleted, Chuang observed, and former President Chen Shui-bian, now on trial for corruption, has exacerbated the DPP's fundraising difficulties. Many former contributors are now unwilling to make donations because of Chen, said Chuang, and although Chen himself would provide a lot of funds for campaigns in the past, that money is no longer available. Without resources, election campaigns will be more difficult for DPP, Chuang predicted.

Looking to Make Songshan Airport a Regional Air Hub

18. (C) Although domestic traffic at the downtown Songshan Airport has largely dried up because of Taiwan's new High Speed Railway between Taipei and Kaohsiung, Hau said he hoped to promote Songshan as a regional air hub (Note: Songshan Airport, formerly limited to domestic flights, is now also being used for cross-Strait charter flights. End note.). Taipei City is working with the Taiwan FAA and has a

"green light" to proceed with plans to add direct flights to Shanghai's downtown Hongqiao Airport, Tokyo's Haneda Airport, and eventually with Seoul's Kimpo Airport. In fact, Shanghai's mayor had been very helpful in promoting the Songshan-Hongqiao corridor. Hau said the Taiwan military has not raised any objections to PRC aircraft flying into Songshan. Next October, Hau said, flights would begin between Songshan and Haneda and he hoped to follow with flights to Hongqiao, then Kimpo. The facilities at Songshan would need to be upgraded if it were to become a regional hub, and Hau indicated he would ask the central government to provide more funding.

World Games, Deaflympics, and Universia

19. (C) The Director mentioned that the U.S. is providing some security assistance to Kaohsiung for the World Games and he offered to look into the possibility of similar assistance for Taipei's Deaflympics this summer. Hau welcomed the idea and noted that 4,000 athletes from 81 countries have already registered for the Deaflympics. Hau also asked for U.S. support for a May 23 vote on who would host the next Universia event, which Hau described as a sporting event for university students. Taipei's competitors to host the event are Pusan and Edmonton, he noted.

YOUNG